

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2183

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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TAGS: SHUM, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: KNCC LETTER TO U.S. COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON TROOP
WITHDRAWAL

REF: SEOUL 1313

1. REPEATED BELOW IS TEXT OF KNCC LETTER TO US COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. KNCC HOPES MESSAGE WILL CONVEY KOREAN CHURCH POSITION ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES MORE CLEARLY TO AMERICAN CHURCHMEN AND PROVIDE US COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WITH MATERIAL TO EXPLAIN KOREAN CHURCH POSITION TO INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE U.S. KNCC WILL ATTEMPT TO MAIL COPIES OF LETTERS THIS WEEK TO DR. WILLIAM THOMPSON AND MISS CLAIRE RANDALL, PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SECRETARY RESPECTIVELY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES - USA.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS:

"TO: OUR AMERICAN CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

IT HAS BEEN 92 YEARS SINCE THE AMERICAN PROTESTANT
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CHURCHES BROUGHT CHRIST'S GOSPEL TO KOREA. DURING THIS CENTURY THE CHURCHES OF KOREA HAVE ACTIVELY UNDERTAKEN AS THEIR OWN MISSION TASK NOT ONLY THE BRINGING ABOUT OF INDIVIDUAL SALVATION, BUT ALSO THE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE UNJUSTLY OPPRESSED BY HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE CHURCHES ALSO INSTILLED IN OUR PEOPLE THE SENSE OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DURING THE

YEARS OF OPPRESSION UNDER JAPANESE ARMS, AND HAVE ALSO SERVED IN THE PROCESS OF INTRODUCING AND ADAPTING DEMOCRATIC IDEALS IN THIS LAND. THUS IT CAN BE SAID THAT KOREA HAS A "MATURE CHRISTIANITY", WHICH HAS BEEN ABLE CONTINUOUSLY TO COMMUNICATE THE GOOD NEWS FROM FRIENDLY PEOPLES, NATIONS AND DEMOCRACIES. OUR CHURCHES WERE THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH FOR THE ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT WHILE KOREA WAS A COLONY SUFFERING UNDER THE OPPRESSIVE POLICIES OF JAPANESE IMPERIALISM. THE CHURCHES HAVE ALSO WORKED FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF OUR PEOPLE WHILE THEY WERE STILL WEAK, AND FOR THE BUILDING UP OF A STRONG DEMOCRATIC SELF-AWARENESS

OUR PEOPLE RECEIVED THEIR LIBERATION FROM JAPANESE IMPERIALISM ON AUGUST 15, 1945, AT THE END OF WORLD

WAR TWO. WE SAW THIS EVENT AS BEING LIKE GOD'S MISSION-EVENT OF LIBERATING ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, AND IN THE JOY OF LIBERATION WE PRAISED GOD FOR THIS ACT OF DELIVERANCE. WE FELT AN OVERFLOWING GRATITUDE ALSO TO THE UNITED STATES FOR HER DETERMINATION AND SACRIFICE. BUT AT ONCE OUR NATIONAL EMOTIONS OF GRATITUDE WERE TURNED TO SORROW AND FRUSTRATION BY THE TRAGIC DIVISION OF OUR LAND. IT PAINS US THAT THIS DIVISION, RESULTING FROM THE SHORTSIGHTED MISJUDGMENT OF THE SITUATION BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, HAS BECOME THE SOURCE OF ALL THE TRAGIC POLITICAL CONDITIONS ON THE KOREAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PENINSULA DOWN TO THE PRESENT. AT THE VERY LEAST THE ALLIED POLITICAL POLICY MAKERS OF THAT DAY CARRY THE GREAT BURDEN OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING BLUNDERED SO AS TO DIVIDE THIS LAND IN A MISTAKE WHICH TODAY CANNOT BE ERASED FROM REALITY.

IN JUNE OF 1950 THE STATEMENT BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE THAT KOREA WAS OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN DEFENSE PERIMETER CAUSED THE REALIZATION OF THE AMBITIONS OF KIM IL SUNG, WHO INVADED THE SOUTH IN HIS PLAN OF COMMUNIZING KOREA. THIS ALSO REMAINS ON THE HISTORICAL RECORD AS AN INERADIIDBLE AMERICAN ERROR. BUT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AMERICAN FORCES THE UNITED NATIONS TROOPS JOINED WITH THE HEROIC COUNTERATTACK OF OUR KOREAN SOLDIERS, AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA WAS ABLE TO HALT THE COMMUNISTS' INVASION AND BRING ABOUT THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT.

AT THE COST OF THE SPILLING OF MANY KOREAN SOLDIERS'
AND UNITED NATIONS TROOPS' BLOOD, A DEMOCRATIC FORM
OF GOVERNMENT WAS ESTABLISHED AND A TEMPORARY STATE OF
PEACE BROUGHT ABOUT. YET THE POLITICAL REGIME OF SYNGMAN
RHEE WAS NOT ABLE TO BRING ABOUT THE REALIZATION OF THE
DEMOCRATIC DREAM OF OUR PEOPLE, FROM THAT TIME TO THE
PRESENT OUR CHURCHES HAVE COME TO FEEL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY
FOR HAVING FAILED TO SPEAK OUT CONDEMNING THE ERRORS AND
MISTAKES OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERS.
SNEIDER

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ACTION EA-09

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SINCE 1960 OUR GOVERNMENT HAS PURSUED A POLICY OF ALL-OUT
EFFORT TO RESIST INVASION BY THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS. BUT
OUT OF OUR OWN FAITH'S CONVICTION WE HAVE CRITICIZED AND
RESISTED OUR GOVERNMENT BECAUSE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS
HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, AND BECAUSE LASTING PEACE AND
WELFARE IN THIS LAND, AND VICTORY OVER COMMUNIST
IDEOLOGY, CANNOT BE BROUGHT ABOUT BY AN ECONOMIC POLICY
WHICH PERMITS EXTREMES OF WEALTH AND POVERTY TOGETHER
WITH AN UNDEMOCRATIC JUDICIARY. AS A RESULT OF THIS
HISTORIC WITNESS MANY PERSONS HAVE UNDERGONE GREAT
HARDSHIP.

OUR CHURCHES DO NOT FEAR THIS HARDSHIP NOR SEEK TO ESCAPE
IT. WE ACCEPT IT AS THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN HISTORY
WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN TO US. YET THERE ARE ASPECTS OF
THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDE
TOWARD OUR SITUATION WHICH WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT. THE
POLICY OF PRESERVING THE STATUS QUO INITIATED BY THE

NIXON GOVERNMENT AND THE FORD ADMINISTRATION'S SECURITY-ORIENTED REALISM HAVE BOTH SERVED TO HINDER THE PROGRESS OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. THIS IS BECAUSE SUCH A SHORT TERM POLICY OF SECURITY CAN BE NO MORE THAN A STOP-GAP MEASURE TOWARD THE LONG-RANGE PROBLEM OF BUILDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LASTING PEACE IN NORTHEAST ASIA. MOREOVER THE VIEW WHICH SEES KOREAN SECURITY AS A PROTECTIVE WALL FOR THE SAFETY OF JAPAN IS A FUNDAMENTAL AFFRONT TO OUR PEOPLE'S NATIONAL AUTONOMY AND DIGNITY.

THE TIME HAS NOW COME TO CORRECT THIS KIND OF HISTORICALLY MISTAKEN ATTEMPT AT A POLICY FOR PEACE. THE OPPORTUNITY HAS COME IN THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION. WE SINCERELY WELCOME PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO THE EXTENSION OF FREEDOM, PEACE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND HIS NEW MORAL FORM OF EXPRESSION. YET WE CANNOT HELP FEELING APPREHENSIVE AND UNEASY ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN TROOPS FROM KOREA.

WE WOULD LIKE HERE TO MAKE CLEAR OUR BELIEF THAT THE PLAN TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN TROOPS WILL DEAL A DEATH BLOW TO OUR PEOPLE'S CHURCHES IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. WE BELIEVE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT TO SURVIVAL ARE MUTUALLY COMPLEMENTARY. WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS FROM KOREA WOULD HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT UPON ALL CITIZENS AND CHURCHES WHO SHARE A LOVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS UPON KOREAN SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE RECENT REPORTS OF THE GIVING OF BRIBES TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. THIS IS BECAUSE WE FEAR THAT THE SCANDAL MAY CAUSE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION TO JUDGE THAT KOREA IS NOT WORTHY OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE, AND BECAUSE PRESSING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS FROM KOREA WILL HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT UPON OUR SECURITY. WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL TRY TO INFLUENCE THE CONGRESS TO UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERNS AND EXPECTATIONS, AND TO MOLD AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION SO AS TO AVOID AGITATION FOR A HASTY WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM KOREA.

THE KOREAN CHURCH HOPES THAT IN THE DAYS AHEAD THE CENTURY-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LONG FRIENDSHIP FORGED BETWEEN OUR TWO CHURCHES MAY BECOME

EVEN DEEPER. WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE POWER OF YOUR PRAYERS TO ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH
IN KOREA IN ITS RIGHTEOUS MISSION STRUGGLE. WE WISH TO
SAY WITH ALL POSSIBLE CLARITY THAT WE ARE FIRMLY
DETERMINED TO FOLLOW IN OUR CALLING TO THE WAY OF THE
CROSS FOR THE SAKE OF FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS.
WE EXPECT THAT THE AMERICAN CHURCHES WILL COME TO A
RENEWED CONCERN AND PRAY FOR US, THAT OUR RESOLVE MAY NOT
BE WEAKENED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS FROM
KOREA.
WE PRAY THAT THE KOREAN AND AMERICAN CHURCHES MAY ONCE
AGAIN UNITE FIRMLY AROUND THEIR COMMON CONFESSION OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO CAME INTO HISTORY AND BORE THE
CROSS FORHPE SAKE OF MANKIND'S FREEDOM, PEACE AND
JUSTICE, AND FOR THE RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

YOURS SINCERELY, (REV.) KIM, KWAN SUK, GENERAL SECRETARY."
SNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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